



February 15, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky and Members
Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: FAV WITH AMENDMENT – SB 528 – Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) **supports with one crucial amendment** SB 528 – Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 18 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State. MSBCA remains committed to the safety of the students they transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

MSBCA applauds the ambitious goals of SB 528, including the goal of eventually transitioning all public school buses in the State to zero-emission vehicles. However, the current relevant language in the bill is extremely problematic in that it prohibits a school board, beginning in 2024, from entering “into a new contract for the purchase or use of any school bus that is not a zero-emission vehicle.” Our contracts with the school boards we serve vary greatly from county to county, as do the terms of those contracts. Some renew year to year, some contracts are for 6 or 12 year periods. By law the school buses we purchase and operate may run for up to 15 years. Many school bus contractors have already placed orders for new diesel buses for the 2022-2023 school year. By prohibiting a school board from entering into a contract for the use of a diesel school bus beginning in 2024, SB 528 would in essence be rendering huge portions of our school bus fleets worthless.

Rather, we would ask that you honor the 15-year life of the vehicles already in our fleets beginning in 2024 and base the “trigger” for transitioning out diesel buses as the date the vehicle is placed in service.

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In Maryland, we don't have huge national contractor companies like they do in other states. Most of us are small family-owned companies that would be severely hurt and likely put out of business by this prohibition.

Once again, MSBCA asked that you amend this portion of the bill to reflect the terms of our existing contracts and the 15-year life of the buses in our existing fleets. Our proposed amendment language is attached herein.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our State.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson, President
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410.268.3099

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PROPOSED AMENDMENT SB 528 – CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW ACT OF 2022

On page 23, line 5 –

(B) Except as provided in subsection (C) of this section, beginning in fiscal year 2024, a county board of education may not enter into a new contract for the purchase or use of any school bus that is not a zero-emission vehicle ***unless the school bus has been in service for less than 15 years and was purchased before January 1, 2023.***